

# **10 Tips**

## **For a Perfect Wedding Ceremony!**

### **1. Choose an Officiant that you are totally comfortable with!**

Does the Officiant relate to you and you to him/her? Do you feel comfortable enough with them to call them by their first name rather than their title? Do they intimidate you and make you reluctant to ask questions? Your Officiant needs to be an engaging and pleasant person, articulate, and able to communicate the love you share to your guests. You need an Officiant who offers more than one ceremony, take it or leave it. Your Officiant should be open to allowing you to write your own vows or choosing from the samples they provide or offer online. Ask your Officiant how they feel about your photographer taking pictures during the ceremony, using a microphone etc. If they have a lot of rules, RUN!! If you are doing a theme wedding, make sure they are willing to go along with the theme even if you ask them to dress differently for your theme.

### **2. Start on time.**

I believe that it is an absolute insult to the bride and groom for a family member or guest to arrive after the wedding has started. You have to wonder why your wedding ceremony is less important than arriving to work or a sporting event on time for the puck drop or the kickoff. Funny that they don't hold off the start for you to get there. Think of those who have left home early to be there on time for your wedding when they have to sit for an extra 15-20 minutes waiting for the ceremony to start. How do they feel about you starting late especially if they are sitting in the hot sun outdoors. They are ready to begin when the invitation says it is to start. A "fashionably-late" arrival at your own wedding is in poor taste.

Every bride and groom should emphasize that their immediate family and their bridal party should be at the wedding ceremony site at least forty-five minutes before the ceremony is to begin.

### 3. No cocktails before the ceremony!

It doesn't happen very often that the cocktail party is scheduled before the ceremony, but usually when it does happen, it is never forgotten.. If there is no food, then they will be percolating and may be dormant only long enough to get to the middle of your ceremony. In the best of circumstances, guests who have a drink before the ceremony will often try to make sure they have a refill before they go in to the ceremony (not a good idea to have them ready to toast too early). Most bridal parties may take a drink to calm their nerves before the ceremony but generally I have found that most remain quite coherent. I have had a couple of grooms though who have overdone it and people noticed, I certainly did.

### 4. Your father should walk the bride down the aisle on his LEFT side, not on his right.

Generally the father walks on the right side of the bride. The bride takes the left arm of the Father or whoever is walking her. If both parents are giving the bride away or a man and a woman, the man should be on the right and the lady on the left of the bride. In the event that the train of the bride's gown is long then it is quite permissible for the father to walk the bride on his right arm or to her left. That way the father doesn't have to step over the train and risk leaving a foot print on her dress. If the father or another male is walking the bride, the groom usually comes forward to meet near the front. The bride says goodbye to her father with a **kiss/hug**, the groom **shakes** the hand of the father and the father **places** the bride's right hand in the groom's right hand. The father is then **seated**. If the mother or another female is walking the bride, the groom would replace the hand shake with a hug.

### 5. Don't do the "wedding walk"

You know the one I mean, left foot, right foot, pause. Right foot, left foot, pause. My grandmother did that. Let's put it away for good. No matter how small the locale for your wedding, if you start down the aisle doing the "wedding walk," the look on your guests' face is almost a sure giveaway of what they are thinking: "Oh, no! I should have brought a book!"). It takes FOREVER. Walk a normal pace ... not too slow like a funeral, and not too fast like a marathon. Normal does it.

## **6. Be careful about letting children stand up with the wedding party.**

The purpose of little children at weddings – ring bearers and flower girls – is to look cute. They always do, and they start the wedding off beautifully. Everyone smiles because they are adorable. If they actually make it to the front, that's a plus!

You will need to be absolutely sure of their ability to stand up front though and not draw the attention to themselves. You will have put all this effort into having a wonderful wedding, and nobody will notice because they are watching the kids. Even if the children are well-behaved (usually "well behaved" for them IS playing around, because that's what little kids do), your guests will be watching them, waiting for the "time bomb" to go off.

Kid ring bearers and flower girls can really be any age you want. And you can have as many of them as you want. I have seen ring bearers so little that they are in diapers, cannot walk, are dressed in a tuxedo and wheeled in by wagon or carried in by a bridesmaid. I have also seen dogs used as ring bearers with the rings tied in a pouch around their neck. I wouldn't try that with my dog but as long as the pet is obedient and good natured, why not? Again, I wouldn't expect them to stand through the entire ceremony though. Maybe someone who they are familiar with could lead them out after they have done their duty.

## **7. Give the best man the rings BEFORE the ceremony.**

It is a good idea for the ring bearer to have fake rings, and the best man to have the real rings in his pocket. The reason for this is obvious: it is all-too-easy for the rings to get tangled in a knot on the pillow the ring bearer carries down. It is also possible, of course, that the ring bearer will just take off with them. If you decide, however, that the ring bearer should carry the real rings (e.g., you are just sure that you can tie the knot properly, or the rings are in a box rather than tied by a ribbon), then the ring bearer should proceed to the best man as soon as he walks down the aisle. If there is going to be a problem, it is better to discover it early – when the best man has time to do something about it – than to discover it when all eyes are on him to produce the rings. Little guys in a ceremony like to feel important to, so even if the ring bearer only has the fake rings, he can go to the

best man who takes them anyway. He won't know the difference and can leave feeling like his job was important, as it is.

## **8. The Bridal Party needs to be conscious of the public scrutiny**

You probably don't believe this, but you are going to be tempted to talk to each other during the ceremony. *Resist this temptation!* You may think that nobody will notice. The truth is that your family and friends *actually are* looking at you. Pay attention and keep your focus on the bride wherever she goes.

The bridesmaids will have their flowers to occupy their hands but the groomsmen need to all stand the same with one hand over the other, never in their pockets. Sun glasses are a no no, especially for photographers.

Groomsmen, please don't hang around the front where the ceremony is taking place waiting for something to happen. You should agree to meet with the Officiant at a specific location and enter the room behind him/her in a nice neat row, preferably not down the centre aisle that is usually decorated for the Bride and her bridesmaids to enter.

## **9. Trust the people you have retained.**

They have done this many times. Don't try to second guess them, and don't worry about a thing. Just leave it in their capable hands. I know. I know. It's *your* wedding, and you have watched over every detail since you first started planning this day, and you want to make certain that every detail goes perfectly. Secretly, however, you know the truth: not everything *will* go exactly as you planned. However, that does not matter. All the basics will go well; the rest are just details. Don't worry about the details. I have seen brides (or their coordinators) print out extremely detailed chronologies of timed, sequenced events. It is usually the first timed sequence that is missed thus throwing off the entire sequence. Just time-phase the big things and go with the flow. Lay back and enjoy your day. It *is* your day, and the people you have hired have done weddings like this many times before. They owe their reputations to their constant attention to making every wedding the absolute best it can be. And yours will be too, if you let them.

## 10. Make that first kiss a GOOD ONE

Your family and guests will be mighty disappointed if your kiss at the altar is a meager little peck, a “breeze-by.” If you lean over from a distance, as if afraid to get too close, your guests will be thinking, “That’s it???” So, what I just described above certainly will not be *YOU!* *Your kiss* will be great! It will show your family and guests just how truly in love you both are. You will hear music in the air, bells will ring and the sprinkler system may even go off. Your guests will swoon, and your parents’ hearts will flutter. No ordinary, dull kiss for you.

### **Conclusion:**

Even after every effort has been taken to do things perfectly, there are always minor little glitches that don’t come off exactly as you wanted them to. My council to couples is that after you have spent weeks planning and preparing, just let your day happen and enjoy it. If you are constantly worried about one of the children misbehaving or some other minor thing, you will find your big day has passed and you really haven’t relaxed and enjoyed yourself. Remember that anything can be edited out of pictures, videos or even audio. ENJOY YOUR DAY!!!!

Norman M. Martin  
Martin Wedding Officiants  
[www.martinweddings.ca](http://www.martinweddings.ca)  
[martinweddings@rogers.com](mailto:martinweddings@rogers.com)